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SUBJECT: GEORGIA PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAM – DRAFT SCOPE OF WORK

Ladies/Gentlemen:

THIS IS NOT A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL. USAID/Caucasus/Tbilisi is preparing for issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for its Public Education Program in Georgia. We are soliciting comments from interested parties, in order to further refine this draft Scope of Work (SOW). Your comments will be appreciated and considered as we finalize the RFP for the proposed contract. The Public Education Program will develop and implement programs designed to increase the awareness and understanding of the general population, the press, and public officials of the benefits of economic and democratic reforms that USAID program activities support. Under the direct guidance of the USAID/Caucasus Mission through the Program Office, the implementor shall provide Public Education activities that increase awareness of the areas of reform supported by the five strategic objectives of the USAID/Caucasus Mission, including Energy and Environment, Economic Restructuring, Democracy and Governance, Rule of Law, and Humanitarian Response/Social Transition. No information on Pricing, Competition, Instructions to Offerors or Evaluation Criteria is available at this time. Please refrain from submitting questions or requests for clarifications in regards to these items, as responses will not be provided. However, comments and supported suggestions will be considered and appreciated. The primary goal is to solicit comments/suggestions on contents of the SOW.

Comments will be accepted until December 6, 2001. All comments shall be addressed to Shahid Pervaiz, Senior Acquisition Specialist, USAID/Caucasus/Tbilisi, 20 Telavi Street, Tbilisi 380003, Georgia, or at fax No. (995-32) 00-14-33 or email spervaiz@usaid.gov or Carlton Bennett, Regional Contracting Officer, USAID/Caucasus, email cbennett@usaid.gov

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Carlton M. Bennett
Regional Contracting Officer

STATEMENT OF WORK

PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAM – GEORGIA

I. SUMMARY

The Public Education program will develop and implement programs designed to increase the awareness and understanding of the general population, the press, and public officials of the benefits of the economic and democratic reforms that USAID program activities support. Under the direct guidance of the USAID/Caucasus Mission through the Program Office, the implementor shall provide Public Education activities that increase awareness of the areas of reform supported by the five strategic objectives of the USAID/Caucasus Mission, including Energy and Environment, Economic Restructuring, Democracy and Governance, Rule of Law, and Humanitarian Response/Social Transition. As a result of the public education activities, representatives of the Government of Georgia (GOG), in Tbilisi and the regions, the public, and other stakeholders will have a better understanding of why these programs benefit the economic and social growth of an independent Georgia, and at the same time, help to ensure political stability and a possible settlement of “frozen conflicts”. The activities are expected to increase dialogue on reform among the population through the media, town meetings, government meetings with the public, and through other venues. This activity is planned for a period of three years at a funding level of approximately \$4.5 million.

II. INTRODUCTION

A. GENERAL BACKGROUND

The USAID/Caucasus Mission activities promote democratic norms, a market-oriented economy, citizen empowerment, rule of law, and the growth of an independent Georgia that benefits all citizens. To this end, USAID activities have supported a wide range of activities carried out in Tbilisi and the regions.

However, there continues to be wide public skepticism of the usefulness and effectiveness of the reform efforts. There is also a perception that, so far, the reforms have had little or no impact on the general population. One public opinion survey has indicated that public pessimism has actually increased from 1999 through 2000 when interviewees were asked whether economic reforms have brought any benefits to the people of Georgia. Public education activities are intended to promote a broader public understanding of the benefits that reforms are expected to bring to individuals and as well as the society and, in return, provide important feedback to the architects of reform. The public education program will focus on areas of reform that are supported by USAID activities, in collaboration with NGOs, professional associations, private sector, and the Government of Georgia.

To date, the public education activities have worked with government officials, journalists, associations, NGOs and USAID implementors to formulate a uniform message supporting the goals of select economic reform activities. These messages have been interwoven into a variety

of components of public education campaigns that aimed to raise public awareness of particular issues, including banking, capital markets, and tax reform. Regular seminars were held for journalists to familiarize them with specific campaign issues. At the same time, work was carried out with senior GOG officials, and their press counterparts, to more effectively deliver the message of reform in their respective areas, and to invite public discussion, debate, and scrutiny of the activities being promoted by the GOG.

Public education activities have included campaigns that bring together different parts of society to focus on one issue, e.g. land reform, and illustrate how each part of society can play a role in formulating and carrying out this policy. One result of these campaigns has been increased media coverage – TV, radio, and newspaper – on targeted topics. The media play an important role in increasing dialogue on the issues that concern citizens most. The campaigns were effective in using the media as a forum for GOG officials, community leaders, NGOs and citizens to openly discuss particular issues and, if successful, to come to a consensus.

Public opinion surveys and focus groups have been an instrumental part of public education activities as they serve as a barometer of the general public's understanding and support, or conversely, lack of understanding and support, for initiatives supported by USAID. Having this information is useful not only for a better understanding of the public education needs, but also to assist in program design and better anticipation of areas of cooperation or obstacles facing program implementation. The results from surveys and focus groups over a period of time also indicate the change in public perceptions of particular topics or areas, and subsequently, serve to measure how effective the actual public education campaign was in explaining and justifying program activities to the public.

B. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Since the initiation of the current public education activity, a new USAID/Caucasus Mission Strategy was developed that outlines program priorities for fiscal years 2000-2003. Perhaps one of the most significant changes has been an increased emphasis on activities in the regions. Prior to 1999, the majority of USAID activities were based in Tbilisi, focusing on national policy, legal frameworks, and broader privatization issues that all serve to form a more solid foundation for a democratic and market-based society. The 2000-2003 mission strategy calls for increased efforts in the regions that will bring the benefits of reform to those who have felt little discernable impact of U.S. and foreign assistance in their lives.

Within the USAID/Caucasus strategic framework itself there have been shifts in priorities within the strategic objectives. Strategic Objective (SO) 1.3 (Economic Growth and Restructuring) will increase focus on agriculture and economic growth. SO 1.5 (Energy and Environment) will increase support for Caucasus region-wide activities, while SO 2.2 (Rule of Law) will launch a new Rule of Law initiative that may, among its many objectives, serve to bolster the anti-corruption initiatives of the GOG. SO 2.3 (Democracy and Governance) has started the first major local governance initiative, which builds on important, but smaller, earlier efforts in the regions. SO 3.1 (Humanitarian Response/Social Transition) will place increased emphasis on community development programs and less on humanitarian assistance programs that provided food and shelter to internally displaced persons and those affected by conflict.

Given these programmatic changes, and the increased focus on activities in the regions, the priorities and formats of public education activities must be adjusted accordingly. To support the expanded areas of reform and the activities in the regions, and to better educate the public, especially outside Tbilisi, it is necessary to have a comprehensive public education program with personnel and resources able to address to the new programmatic and regional priorities.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THIS CONTRACT

USAID/Caucasus will rely on this contract as the core technical, facilitating and advisory source in the area of public education. The Contractor shall have a competent staff deployed in targeted regions and a center that can coordinate and carry out effective public education campaigns. The Contractor shall provide media and information advisory expertise to various Georgian counterparts and other USAID implementors. The Contractor shall take full advantage of and maximize use of local Georgian organizations and personnel in program implementation.

The Contractor shall have the capacity to design, implement and assess public education work in all technical disciplines funded by USAID in Georgia, including: energy and environment; economic growth and restructuring; democracy and governance; rule of law; and humanitarian response/social transition. At critical stages of programmatic activities, especially during heightened press coverage of a particular topic, the Contractor shall also provide training and assistance to GOG counterparts.

Activities under this contract will include:

- 1) In-depth public education campaigns;
- 2) Capacity-building of USAID counterparts and implementors;
- 3) Increasing media coverage of activities in the region; and
- 4) Short term rapid response activities that address urgent public information needs.

IV. SCOPE OF WORK (SOW)

The USAID/Caucasus strategic approach to public education involves the coordinated dissemination of information through the news media, using officials from the government and non-governmental organizations as spokespeople.

A. General Requirements

While the current public education activities focus only on economic growth programs, the Contractor shall expand the activities to include all Strategic Objectives -- Economic Growth and Restructuring (SO 1.3), Energy and Environment (SO 1.5), Rule of Law (SO 2.2), Democracy and Governance (SO 2.3), and Humanitarian Response/Social Transition (3.1).

The Contractor, in coordination with the Program Office, shall serve the public education needs of all five strategic objectives identified above. Where appropriate, the Contractor shall coordinate public education efforts on two or more strategic objectives, e.g. micro credit programs administered through SO 1.3 and SO 3.1.

In order to ensure effective coordination of this activity across all strategic objectives and in multiple regions of Georgia, the Mission has established a Public Education Working Group (PEWG).

The Contractor shall develop strong working relationships and work closely with USAID contractors, GOG counterparts, NGOs, associations, and the media. The Contractor's point of contact with USAID will be the Cognizant Technical Officer (CTO).

The Contractor shall develop and design materials and work plans that effectively address the targeted issues of the public education campaigns. Work plans will be developed in collaboration with the CTO and PEWG. An annual work plan shall be established that will provide the overall framework and direction of the public education program.

Work plans will be approved by the CTO, in conjunction with the relevant SO Team(s), while specific campaign and other informational materials will be reviewed and approved by the relevant Technical Offices. Work plans will describe the objectives, or message, of the campaigns and other activities, the target audiences, and the impact the messages should have in order to be considered effective. See Reporting Requirements section below.

B. Specific Requirements

Bidders responding to this RFP will submit an annual work plan that will incorporate all four of the below core elements:

1. Campaigns: Public education plans will be implemented by the public education Contractor, in conjunction with the USAID technical contractor, and/or the counterpart GOG agency, depending on which is most suitable and what type of public education campaign is required.

Public Education Campaigns may include:

- Anti-corruption activities promoted through Rule of Law and Economic Restructuring activities.
- Tax policies and a plain language tax guide.
- Public participation in policy making in the energy sector, in conjunction with GNERC, the Ministry of Fuel and Energy, the Ministry of Environment, and/or the State Agency for Oil and Gas Regulation.
- Georgia Assistance Initiative and the Georgia Community Mobilization Initiative.
- New Rule of Law activities.
- GOG agencies response mechanisms to the Administrative Code section on Freedom of Information, in cooperation with the Georgian Young Lawyers Association.

The Contractor shall work with individual USAID implementors (including other media training and development implementors), GOG counterparts, NGOs, and associations to develop and implement public education strategies. Because of the sensitivities of certain activities, the Contractor at times shall develop strategies for delivering press messages and press responses in anticipation of public and/or media response. These preemptive activities may include press advertisements or other widely distributed announcements giving justification for activities that the public may not fully understand. To increase the impact of these messages or announcements, the Contractor will work with representatives from the Georgian Government, NGOs, associations, the media, and with USAID personnel.

2. Capacity Building

The Contractor shall assist and advise various Georgian counterparts, including Government officials, NGOs, and associations, as well as USAID contractors, as part of the concerted effort to educate the public on targeted issues. These activities will require the Contractor to:

- Prepare government officials and other stakeholders for press events and media response, emphasizing short, concise and effective communication with the press.
- Conduct regional meetings in partnership with implementors that involve the local population, the local government, NGOs, media, and other stakeholders.
- Introduce media appearances of GOG officials, NGOs, and specialists on regularly syndicated news and public interest television and radio shows.
- Assist in developing "hotlines" and other mechanisms to increase two-way communication / feedback.
- As appropriate, develop a video or other promotional materials on single topics that target a specific audience and/or the general public.
- Help develop website content (not websites themselves) that provides Internet users with access to information, regulations, laws, and descriptions of the activities supported, thereby increasing transparency, especially among government agencies.

3. Expanding Public Education in the Region

As Georgia struggles to recover from the severe economic, social, and political upheavals of the 1990's, the capital Tbilisi has made more advances than the regions. This may be attributable to the fact that political power is concentrated in Tbilisi, that more international organizations are

based in Tbilisi, or simply that the city itself offers more opportunities for economic and social progress.

Many of the regions of Georgia have been left behind. In most regions, democratic norms have not yet taken root, entire communities that used to rely on a local factory have been traumatized by closedowns, and the bare essentials of electricity, natural gas, and water are non-existent. Understandably, regional residents are reluctant to believe that more reforms can bring them any benefit.

In part as a response to these conditions, the USAID 2000-2003 Strategic Plan for Georgia calls for increased activities in the regions. Coincidentally, it is important for communities in the regions to become increasingly involved in discussions of the reforms being carried out in the country.

The Contractor shall design and implement activities that increase public dialogue on the reform areas supported by specific USAID activities in the region. In addition, the Contractor shall facilitate town hall meetings, journalist seminars, and other events that will highlight the set of reforms being supported by USAID partners in particular regions.

For example, twelve USAID implementors are currently operating in the Imereti region in rule of law, credit, community development, agriculture, and other areas. The reforms supported by these activities are expected to bring concrete benefits to the local population. The Contractor shall organize events that encourage public dialogue on how a combination of these reform activities in a designated area may collectively improve the overall economic and social conditions of that area.

The Contractor shall have staff based in at least two regions. This staff, in coordination with the Contractor's Tbilisi-based office, will be responsible for organizing events and activities that increase public awareness of the reform efforts in their respective regions. The Contractor's regional staff will work with local media, NGOs, government officials, and USAID implementors in designing and implementing public education activities in that region. Other regions may be covered by a mobile public education team. Priority regions shall be selected in coordination with the CTO.

The majority of people in the regions still rely on Tbilisi-based media outlets (television, radio, newspapers). Therefore, in addition to local journalists, the Contractor shall ensure that Tbilisi-based journalists and media outlets are informed of all regional events and, to the extent possible, attend region-based activities. Press will have the opportunity to talk with participants and beneficiaries of regional activities, as well as with implementors, GOG counterparts, local NGOs and specialists.

4. Rapid Response

There will be occasional needs for rapid media response, and the Mission's Program Office will coordinate these urgent press and public education activities with the Contractor. These situations will arise when unexpected events, either positive or negative, significantly impact on-going reform efforts. In these instances, the Contractor shall rapidly develop a media response plan, in coordination with USAID, other implementors, and GOG counterparts, as necessary.

The plan will include preparing USAID implementors and counterparts to deliver a consistent, concise and cohesive message to the media and the public on the real goals and the real benefits the reforms are expected to bring. The Contractor shall also distribute materials to the media and hold seminars for journalists to reiterate the ultimate goals of the reform activity in question.

It is expected that these situations will be rare, and that they will not interrupt the ongoing activities of the Contractor in other areas. However, the Contractor shall be required to quickly implement press and media activities when such urgent occasions arise.

C. Cross-Cutting Issues

1. **Gender:** USAID/Georgia places considerable focus on the integration of gender considerations throughout the portfolio. Women play a prominent role in both the public and private sectors. Even so, women in both government and business have different needs from men, and must contend with gender biases. Identifying and addressing these issues in project design and implementation shall lead to more equitable and effective activities. Consequently, applicants for this contract shall identify how gender considerations will be addressed, and will identify specific mechanisms and procedures to ensure that gender equity will be achieved.
2. **Integration with other activities:** In order to ensure maximum effectiveness and consistency, training provided in any area related to ongoing USAID-funded activities must be coordinated with the organizations under contract to USAID to implement said activity. Several USAID-funded activities have public education components built into their programs and USAID also funds activities that are aimed at improving the capacity and the professionalism of journalists and the media. Coordination with all these groups is critical.
3. **Conflict Resolution:** By strategically concentrating development activities in selected local regions, and through cross-cutting efforts to devolve impact to the regions outside Tbilisi, USAID is positioning itself to help prevent the spread of conflict. Whenever appropriate, Public Education activities will encourage public dialogue on how the reforms in their particular region may have a role in helping prevent the spread of conflict.

V. Reporting Requirements

1. Annual Work Plan

In performing this contract, the Contractor shall address the needs of both USAID and its principle counterparts. An annual work plan will be developed and submitted to the CTO for approval within 60 days of the start of the activity. The Contractor and the CTO shall jointly establish mechanisms to review and implement this work plan through effective engagement and coordination with the PWEG. The work plan for each successive year shall be submitted at least 30 days before the start of the work year.

2. Semi-Annual Reports

Semi-annual reports must be submitted to the CTO, to coincide with and contribute to the Mission's semi-annual Portfolio and Activity Reviews. The format for these reports will be provided by the Mission.

3. Quarterly Reports and Coordination Meeting

Each quarter, the Contractor will meet with the PEWG to review work plans and to revise as necessary. One week prior to the meeting, the Contractor shall provide the Program Office with quarterly reports that will include: a summary of the previous quarter's actions, plans for the next quarter, and issues for review.

4. Monthly Reviews and Coordination Meeting

The Contractor shall submit a draft agenda before every monthly meeting with the CTO citing the status of current activities and any proposed adjustments or modifications to the work plan. Two working days prior to the monthly coordination meetings, the Contractor shall submit a concise monthly report that will provide the framework for discussion of the monthly coordination meeting. The Contractor shall develop the format of this report, with approval from the CTO.

VI. Performance Monitoring

It is expected that, as a result of this activity, material advances will have been made in the general public's better understanding of the program areas supported by USAID. The Contractor is expected to be able to demonstrate that results are being achieved. The Contractor shall establish a Monitoring and Implementation Plan that will define performance indicators that will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the activity. A draft monitoring plan with illustrative indicators shall be included with the proposal, along with an explanation of how data will be collected, analyzed and used. The Final Monitoring Plan shall be submitted to USAID/Georgia for review and approval within 60 days of the start of the contract.

In addition to the on-going performance measurement implemented to support the Monitoring Plan, it is expected that the Contractor shall conduct at least one national survey per year to be used as a tool to measure the impact of public education activities and to address individual needs of the SO teams and Program Office. CTO approval of the survey instrument is required.